

City's Students Enchanted At Yale

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NEW HAVEN -- As fifth-graders from Rawson Elementary School in Hartford descended on Hogwarts Thursday, it was magic.



No - wait - make that Yale University's Slytherin House - rather Silliman College at Yale. It was, in fact, the likeness to the wizards' famous school that helped charm the city's youngsters who were in New Haven shopping for a college.

"It's like Harry Potter," said Darryl Ellis. "They put you in groups. You have your own dining room and they make you feel like home."

All the magic and Gothic architecture was enough to send Yale straight to the top of some youngsters' wish lists, though the University of Connecticut, with its famous basketball teams, is firmly ensconced in the top spot. But even those basketball aficionados were enchanted enough

by Yale to make it their back-up choice.

Yale was one of 13 college campuses hosting Hartford's fifth-graders this week as part of Mayor Eddie A. Perez's effort to encourage Hartford students to graduate from high school and then enroll in college.

Classes from other schools went to Wesleyan University, Trinity College, UConn's Storrs and West Hartford campuses, the University of Hartford, Saint Joseph College, Southern, Eastern and Central Connecticut state universities, Capital and Manchester community colleges and Goodwin College.

Rawson students had trouble deciding which of the activities at Yale was the most delightful: the campus tour led by sophomore Stephanie Wright, who wore a stylish pink blazer; a DNA experiment at the Peabody Museum led by Yale science professors and graduate students or the Peabody Museum's dinosaur collection. Even having lunch with the professors was fun.

The cool thing about the science experiment, students said, was that they got to take home a vial filled with their own DNA on a necklace.

Wright's descriptions of life at Yale were tempting, too. Sitting on the broad lawn of Silliman College, she described the intramural teams that play other residential colleges in pool, basketball, table tennis and lots of other areas.

Wright underscored that students who hope to attend Yale should concentrate on their academics, but straight A's are not the only criteria the university uses. What's important for admission, she said, is a well-written essay that illustrates how interesting the applicant is and distinguishes him or her from other applicants. Interviews are important, too, she said.

"Yale likes to look for people who are really interesting."



Jasmine Rogers took notes in a special notebook during the tour. She gave the campus high marks. "It's unique," she said. "It's waaaaay different from other colleges I've seen."

So would she like to enroll at Yale?

"YES," Jasmine said decisively. "But my first choice is the University of Hartford. I want to stay close to my mom."

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